4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14



cause the latter to die by aggravating his illness. Similarly a man's mistress must avoid coming near the hut of his wife when she is ill or in childbirth, lest the mistress's sinister track endanger the life of the wife.

*Makhuma* (from *ku khuma*, to mix) is a concept which uses the analogy of contamination by mixture or contact to account for physical weakening, wasting away or enfeeblement (*ku figchela*). The situations that constitute the chief source of *makhuma* are critical transitions in the life of the individual as well as serious crises such as severe illnesses. The evil contaminates or infects the person who has undergone the change or who, in the case of death, comes into contact with its baneful influence. He seems to suffer from loss of vitality, or to become dislocated because of the change in his condition.

The measures taken to combat *makhuma* are in the first instance preventive. Strengthening medicines are administered or inoculated to fortify the individual by anticipation; thereafter, under isolating conditions that are gradually relaxed, an adjustment is made to the new situation. Thus novices in the various initiations are medically treated in anticipation of their susceptibility to *khuma* on entering their new condition. Babies are fortified (*ku thusa*, to be helped) by scarification and steaming before they leave the hut of confinement; kin and other inmates of the village must after a death be readjusted by means of medicines and other treatment to the change caused by the death lest they *khuma*. *Makhuma* also affects possessed people who fail to use medicine with the first-fruits. A man will *khuma* if he cohabits with a woman after the death of her child unless she has first been medically purified, and she must also be careful not to give food to other children before treatment lest they get ill and die. If one baby dies, any illness its successor may have is liable to be diagnosed as due to *makhuma*. Even cattle may *khuma* after a death in the village or if a woman enters the cattle fold.

By logical extension and the invocation of a further series of presuppositions the concept is applied to the bones of a diviner, which are liable to *khuma* (lose their diagnostic powers) every month—they are said to 'see their moons'—or when used to divine about a death, and must be washed in medicine before being used again. Similarly the queen's rain-medicine will *khuma* unless given the first termites and first-fruits, or when people neglect observances connected with the burial of those who are 'hot'.

The evils differently conceptualized in the notions of 'heat', *makhuma* and 'shadow' have this in common: they are all instances of a ritual impurity, generated by certain states or conditions, not because of their morally reprehensible nature but because of their abnormality or their relation to reproductive processes or critical changes in life. 'Heat' and 'shadow' appear to be different aspects of the same kind of ritual impurity, but 'shadow' is dangerous only to someone whose resistance is low because of illness or immaturity, while 'heat' may have deleterious effects not only on healthy people but on natural phenomena, on ancestor spirits, and on